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ABSTRACT

Abstracts of 12 papers concerning the effectiveness of various communication systems are printed here. Subjects of the papers are: the appraisal of organizational communication systems, and evaluation of ECCO analysis as a communication audit methodology, assessment of attitude and opinion change effects of the communication audit, organizational communication and social action, message diffusion as a communication audit tool, techniques used to study communication variables in organizations, a communication systems analysis of KOB-TV, organizational communication--an analysis based on empirical data, auditing the communication of human service organizations, employee knowledge of hospital compensation policies and supervisory effectiveness, a mass media profile of agricultural scientists at Texas A and M University, and the development and field testing of two internal communication measuring instruments. Sources and cost of most of the papers are included. (JK)

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DIVISION IV: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

CONSTRUCTION OF A COMMUNICATION AUDIT:

AN EXAMINATION OF COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION
& WELFARE

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THE APPRAISAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

by Howard H. Greenbaum
Motor Parts Industries Inc.
Melville, New York 11746
No. of pages: 30
Cost per copy: \$1.00 (includes mailing)
Member of Division IV: Organizational Communication

The thesis of this paper involves the following concepts:
(1) the communication system is a fundamental factor in the attainment of high levels of organizational effectiveness;
(2) the organization requires periodic appraisals of both the overall communication system and the activities constituting the parts of the system; and (3) communication and management researchers fulfill important social needs by developing the structure and processes required for practical communication system appraisals by qualified organization managers.

The presentation includes a detailed definition of organizational communication, an identification of the components of a communication appraisal system appropriate to such definition, a workplan for communication system appraisal, and a discussion of management's role in the area of communication system appraisals.

Coordinative-internal communication is the field of concentration. The proposed analysis calls for a review of the overall communication system, including the policies and controls relative thereto. In addition, for each significant communication activity, this approach requires criteria examination, standards establishment, and performance measurement, with due consideration being given to situational elements, including general organizational variables.

Emphasis is placed on the responsibilities of organization management for the maintenance of an effective communication system through an effective system of appraisal. The appraisal procedures suggested rely heavily on presently accepted propositions and methods in the fields of communication research and organization management.

One of the conclusions indicates that the proposed communication appraisal approach might be considered as a logical framework for an important segment of organizational communication research, for the reason that it appears capable of noting research needs, and assimilating research findings within a defined structure.

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AN EVALUATION OF ECCO ANALYSIS
AS A COMMUNICATION AUDIT METHODOLOGY

by Evan E. Rudolph
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No. of Pages 25
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Member of Division IV

This paper presents as its major theme the advantages, disadvantages, successes and failures of Ecco Analysis as synthesized from fifteen field applications in widely diversified organizational environments. The paper also discusses the actual instrument and administration procedures found to be particularly beneficial. Included is a review of thirty-four of the data collection instruments most often used in organizational communication research.

The paper demonstrates that, for the researcher interested in the analyzation of communication flow in organizations, Ecco Analysis has distinct advantages when compared to other communication audit methodologies.

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ASSESSMENT OF ATTITUDE AND OPINION CHANGE EFFECTS
OF THE COMMUNICATION AUDIT

by Max B. Franc
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18 pages
Cost per Copy \$1.00
Member of Division IV

To reduce ambiguities and overexpectations with respect to the communication audit, there will have to be evaluation of the communication audit itself. One approach will be to work to find effects of administration of the audit by assessing attitude and opinion changes of people in an organization experiencing an audit.

The writer gives the rationale for a questionnaire for a before-and after-attitude and opinion check. Questions are presented for the purpose of assessing such effects. Those questions address changes pertaining to the following subjects: (1) concept or definition of communication; (2) relative effectiveness, in organizational communication, of respective channels or media; (3) concept of communication breakdown; (4) overall efficacy of a communication audit; (5) relationships between the organizational chart and organizational communication; and (6) concept of two-way communication.

Data about attitude and opinion changes in connection with those subjects should have implications for persuasion treatment cells for experimental research designs. The writer feels that the rationale for the proposed questionnaire will be useful in connection with a variety of innovators' approaches toward constructing communication audit instruments. Endeavors both to construct audits and to construct instruments to evaluate the audit itself must deal with a broad problem of formulating quantitative indices against which to measure all such efforts. Those indices will have to show performance in connection with accomplishment of various kinds of objectives: organizational, programmatic, individual, and social.

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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL ACTION

by James E. Grunig
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No. of Pages: 19
Member of Division IV

Communication researchers have long been interested in the role of the change agent--the professional helper who stimulates change at the individual, group, organizational, or community level. Few recognize, however, that the change agent is a member of a formal organization whose norms and values often diverge from those of the clientele system. The purpose of this paper is to conceptualize the nature of communication between two systems whose norms and values diverge from one another and to determine the possible effects such communication can achieve. The concepts developed are then applied to the problem of auditing the effectiveness of an organization's communication with its clientele. Although the evidence presented is drawn from studies of governmental and other agencies dealing with a low-income clientele, the implications should extend to any extra-organizational communication--such as public relations, labor relations, or marketing--with a public or clientele with interests divergent from those of the organization.

Research evidence is presented from studies conducted by the author and others in Colombia to show the importance of the organization in determining the behavior of change agents. Evidence is then presented to show the nature of organization-clientele communication by anti-poverty agencies in the United States and the nature of inter-organizational communication within a community. Finally, a theory of inter-system communication is developed and concepts and measuring devices are presented for auditing the effectiveness of extra-organizational communication. Effectiveness is defined as the amount of learning the organization does from its clientele.

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BEYOND BUREAUCRACY -- MESSAGE DIFFUSION AS A COMMUNICATION AUDIT TOOL

by Richard V. Farace and Hamish M. Russell

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East Lansing, Michigan 48823

No. of pages: 22

Cost per copy (including mailing): 50¢

Member of Division IV - Organizational Communication

Given the predictions of such people as John Gardner and Alvin Toffler, that the organizations of the future will be constantly changing to meet new problems, we see a challenge as communication scientists to develop concepts that allow us to describe current communication practices. We also need to develop audit techniques that will allow us to economically measure and describe the communication performance of organizations.

We propose that the following concepts offer a powerful way of describing communication patterns and interactive behavior in organizations: structure, load, rate of message flow, extent of message distortion, amount of redundancy, the efficiency of the activated message pathways, and the functions that the messages serve for the system.

Five communication audit research techniques are evaluated in terms of their cost and applicability for the measurement of each of the above communication concepts --

- the duty study, where key respondents record their communication behavior.
- the use of trained observers who record the communication behaviors of key personnel.
- the cross-sectional survey that elicits respondents' perceptions of their general communication behavior.
- the 'small world' technique that traces the steps taken by a given message destined for a specified receiver.
- the message diffusion approach, where a specific message is traced in its diffusion through the organization.

Considerable advantages are noted for the message diffusion approach when it is weighed against these other techniques for this communication audit purpose. Major benefits are seen in both minimizing costs and maximizing the data that can be gathered about the communication system's performance.

Finally, some brief findings are reported from a study of message diffusion in a Federal agency.

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A REVIEW OF SOME TECHNIQUES USED TO STUDY COMMUNICATION
VARIABLES IN ORGANIZATIONS

by H. J. Ayres
Department of Speech
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Number of pages, 9
.25 each
Division IV

This paper consists of a brief introduction to the discovery of communication as a variable in organizations. The subsequent need to develop instruments adapted to gathering data on organizational communication is discussed.

The second portion of the paper consists of a brief review of a number of specific techniques that have been used to assess communication in organizations. Retention measures, disparity scores, readability measures, self recording methods, measures of rumor transmission, and ways of measuring network effectiveness are reviewed. Each of these reviews is followed by a brief assessment of the merits of the instrument.

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A COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS ANALYSIS OF KOB-TV

by Gerald Goldhaber & Hilary Horan
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45 pages
\$.75 per copy
Division IV

In Fall, 1971, a communication systems analysis was conducted at the facilities of a southwest television station. The research team consisted of four students under the direction of Dr. Gerald Goldhaber, Professor of Organizational Communication at The University of New Mexico.

Due to the size of the company (67 employees), it was decided by the research team that it would be feasible and most reliable to interview all employees of the station to compile data for analysis. The company was divided functionally so that employees within a sub-system would be questioned by the same interviewer. This allowed for cross evaluation of information about common situations. The measurement instrument used was a structured interview schedule. The questions were all open-ended and designed to generate conversation and probe specific problems and conflicts that were occurring at that time.

The interviewing lasted five weeks. Although repeated attempts were made several (13) employees could not be contacted for interviewing. Reasons were various; for example - they being part-time help, working a considerable distance from the station's main facility, etc.

Problems were found in organizational, intra- and inter-personal communication and management. Communication deficiencies were: non-transmission of information, unclear verbal (oral and written) communication. Serious problems stemmed from:

1. lack of dissemination of general information to all by management;
2. poor distribution of specific information concerning courses of action by managers;
3. the existence of competition where it serves to decrease efficiency;
4. cases of low morale in some areas;
5. personal authority used to by pass established lines of communication and management.

The study describes analysis of these problems and the training program designed by the team to lead toward a solution of the conflicts.

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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION - AN ANALYSIS BASED ON EMPIRICAL DATA

by Marshall H. Brenner, Assistant Professor
and Norman B. Sigband, Professor
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University of Southern California
Los Angeles, California 90007
No. of Pages: 11
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Member of ICA

An effort was made to analyze the communication practices of a major aerospace firm in a two step procedure.

Some 65 top level managers were interviewed in the initial phase. This was followed by a 41 question mail survey of over 700 of the firm's employees.

The data gathered provide an empirical basis for some of the generally accepted principles:

Managers in the upper corporate hierarchy of an organization are better informed than those lower.

Communications in an organization are more effective if the individual receives them from his immediate superior.

Subordinates keep their superiors better informed when the former knows what will be done with his ideas.

On the other hand, a few unexpected results were received among which were:

Supervisors had more difficulty obtaining assistance than either their superiors or subordinates.

There seems to be logical answers for an individual's mode of communication--either oral or written or why he selects one over another.

Over all the study does seem to indicate that each organization develops a Communication Style that reflects internal patterns.

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AUDITING THE COMMUNICATION OF HUMAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS:
ORGANIZATIONAL AND COMMUNICATION DIAGNOSIS OF ANTIPOVERTY
AGENCIES

by Mark Hickson, III
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13 pages
Cost per copy \$1.00
Member of Organizational Communication Division

A field study was conducted for the purpose of determining whether a general systems model was applicable to an anti-poverty agency. The primary criterion for auditing the effectiveness of such agencies was "communication adaptation". It was the uniqueness and universality of the methodology employed that allowed for accurate auditing.

Ideal and empirically-derived communication models were conceptualized from appropriate theoretical and empirical data. Varied methodological techniques were necessary to provide holistic models. Among these techniques were participant-observation, interviews, and content analyses.

The results indicated that because of the formidable political and social restraints antipoverty agencies have extreme difficulty in appropriately adjusting to "negative information input". Additionally, the ambiguity of these organizations operating under the aegis of an established institution creates "institutional schizophrenia".

Of major importance, this study re-discovered the importance of the concept of power, which has been highly neglected in communications research.

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EMPLOYEE KNOWLEDGE OF HOSPITAL
COMPENSATION POLICIES AND SUPER-
VISORY EFFECTIVENESS

by Harish C. Jain
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No. of Pages 12
No cost per copy or mailing
Member of Division: Organizational
Communication Division

An important assumption which underlies much of the industrial and hospital management literature is that the first-line supervisor is a key communicator of organizational policies to employees. One aspect of this assumption is that employee knowledge of compensation policies is related to the supervisor's performance. This aspect is investigated in this study.

Objective measures of employee knowledge of compensation policies were compared with measures of supervisory performance in the two hospitals selected for this study.

No significant relationship was found between employee knowledge and supervisory performance scores. Several possible reasons for this finding are suggested.

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MASS MEDIA PROFILE OF AGRICULTURAL
SCIENTISTS AT TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

by William E. Tedrick
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Number pages -- 20
Costs -- none
Member of Division IV

This survey attempts to establish a benchmark profile of how agricultural scientists of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station research staff perceive certain aspects of the uses and importance of mass media in communicating their research work.

Scientists were requested to respond to a series of survey questions designed to reflect their opinions and attitudes around variables related to (1) the importance they attach to mass media as a communication tool for their work, (2) how they view audience priorities, (3) what role they should perform in mass media communication, and (4) certain message-channel variables.

A stratified random sample of 91 scientists was drawn to receive the survey form from which about two-thirds were returned for analysis.

The general profile developed from the data shows agricultural scientists to place only moderate importance on mass media as a communication tool to further their research work. They devote an average of 2 percent of their professional time to mass media communications, but generally feel that they should spend more time in this role. They view the general public (i.e. the man on the street) as a very low priority audience, placing highest priority to specialists and teachers who use the results of their work.

They tend to have a certain distrust for their co-workers who use mass media extensively, but qualify this attitude by saying each case should be considered on its individual merit. About 50 percent of the scientists feel they should be evaluated on their use of the mass media as well as on their contribution to technical and professional journals. Scientists put high trust in farm magazines but consider newspapers to be rather low in credibility.

They agree universally that mass media is the single most important source of information on which their professional image is formed among general public, and are not very sure about the present state of their professional image.

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THE DEVELOPMENT AND FIELD TESTING OF TWO INTERNAL COMMUNICATION MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

by David T. Burhans, Jr.
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No. of pages: 99 (including sample instruments)
Cost per copy (including mailing): \$3.00

Two field studies were conducted for the purpose of designing and testing communication measuring instruments sensitive to employees' preferences for particular communication policies within their organization, to employees' satisfaction with their organization's internal communication practices, and to supervisors' assumptions (or misassumptions) about their employees' preferences and degree of satisfaction.

As a result of the first study, three revised versions of the COMMUNICATION POLICY PREFERENCE SCALE were constructed. The first--FORM A-- is maximally sensitive to differences in employees' beliefs about and preferences for particular communication policies. The second revised scale--FORM B--is maximally sensitive to supervisors' misassumptions about their employees' communication beliefs and preferences. The third scale--FORM C--contains those items which are maximally sensitive to both employees' beliefs and preferences and supervisors' misassumptions about their employees' beliefs and preferences.

As a result of the second study, five revised versions of the INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT were constructed. The first--FORM A-- is maximally sensitive to differences in employees' degree of satisfaction with the internal communication practices operant in their work environment. The second revised scale--FORM B--is maximally sensitive to supervisors' misassumptions about their employees' satisfaction with particular internal communication practices. The third scale--FORM C--contains those items which are maximally sensitive to both employees' degree of satisfaction with internal communication practices and supervisors' misassumptions about their employees' satisfaction with those practices. The fourth revised scale--FORM D--contains those items which are most sensitive for detecting employees' dissatisfaction with particular internal communication practices. The fifth revised scale--FORM E--contains those items which are maximally sensitive to both employees' dissatisfaction with particular communication practices and supervisors' misassumptions about their employees' degree of satisfaction with those practices.

Although the primary purpose of these two studies was to design and test the communication measuring instruments described above, the data gathered also permitted the making of certain statements about the relationship among the employees' communication beliefs and preferences, their supervisors' assumptions about those beliefs and preferences, the employees' degree of satisfaction with internal communication, their supervisors' assumptions about their employees' degree of satisfaction, and two measures of workgroup productivity.

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